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SUCCESS STORY

Hotline Improves Water Delivery in Mazar

USAID helps the Mazar Water Supply Department improve customer service.



Photo: USAID/CAWSA

Each call to the hotline is logged, and follow-up action is tracked daily until the repair is made.

Improving water service delivery through better customer service is a priority for the Mazar Water Supply Department. Customers can call either of the two hotline numbers – 0502043448 or 0502043449 – whenever they experience a problem with their water service.

Engineer Abdul Jamil Maseh, director of the Mazar Water Supply Department, is committed to providing the best customer service possible for water customers in the city of Mazari Sharif. With support from the U.S. Government, Eng. Jamil created a customer care department in October 2009 and launched a customer service hotline. Now, city residents can call the department to report service problems, leaks, or damaged infrastructure in their neighborhoods.

Customer care – a relatively new phenomenon in Afghanistan – is a major undertaking that requires the hard work of every water utility employee. Through close cooperation between the Customer Care Office and the Finance Office, the Mazar Water Supply Department has been developing a customer care database that includes all financial and geographic records. When the system is complete, the department's technical staff will be able to respond more quickly to service calls and inform affected customers of any pending changes in service.

Through two customer care locations, the Mazar Water Supply Department has responded to 248 calls and reports to date. The average response time is only 1.6 days, with 77 percent of repairs completed within one day of the call. In the rare instances when a complaint takes longer to resolve, the department ensures that customers continue to receive water service.

Eng. Jamil and his technical team analyze the customer care records to anticipate and avoid future problems. For example, to prevent delays in repairs, USAID has assisted the department in creating an emergency repair fund and procuring a spare pump for temporary use during a pump failure. By identifying locations most frequently affected, they can prioritize rehabilitation. This analysis also helps improve inventory planning to ensure that essential supplies are always in stock, and will make future technical responses much more effective.

The entire Mazar Water Supply Department staff is justifiably proud of their customer care department and its rapid response. Water service delivery continues to improve in the city, and the department's staff work hard to ensure good relationships with customers.